Hungarian Noble's Amazing Extravagance

Count Paul Szapary
the Titled Hungarian Spendthrift
and his Countess

Count Szapary's Wealth Disappeared, and So Did He.

Was a Reckless Gambler and a Most Lavish Entertainer.

Once Lost the Sum of 250,000 Crowns at a Sitting.

Vienna, Feb. 16.

COUNT PAUL SZAPARY, leader of Hungarian aristocrats, millionaire, spendthrift, and business man, has suddenly left Budapest and debts of some 5,000,000 crowns behind him. His disappearance is the one topic of conversation in the Hungarian capital.

His friends declare that he has only gone to Paris and will return in a few weeks. Meanwhile the countess, a wealthy Polish aristocrat, has also left Budapest and gone to her estates in Russian Poland.

A Social Figure.

Count Paul Szapary is perhaps the most prominent social figure in Austria-Hungary, certainly in the last named half of the dual monarchy. Only thirty-three years of age, wealthy, handsome, charming, and lavishly hospitable, the count is the beau ideal of Hungarian noblemen.

No distinguished stranger ever came to Budapest without becoming the guest of the count. King Edward, when Prince of Wales; Princess Charlotte of Meiningen, sister of the German Emperor; the Duchess of Marlborough, the Duke of Hamilton; Countess Lonyay, widow of the Crown Prince Rudolph—these names testify to the international character of the count's princely hospitality.

High Mode of Living.

This princely hospitality, coupled with an equally extravagant mode of living and all the Hungarian's passion for the card table, are said to be responsible for the present disorganized state of the count's finances.

In spite of vast revenues from his estates and the income of a rich wife, the count is said in the last few months to have made such shipwreck of his fortunes that he cannot even maintain a moderate state in society. His relatives have repeatedly extricated him from financial difficulties before, and are now trying again to arrange his affairs.

A Heavy Gambler.

The count's present troubles are said to be entirely due to his gambling losses, which ten years ago amounted to large sums. During the season of 1895 and 1896, the count is reported to have lost about two million crowns in the famous Casino Club at Budapest, the chief resort of the card-playing Hungarian magnates.

A quarter of a million crowns is often lost and won in a single evening's play there. Very high personages have sat at these card tables. King Edward, of course, before his accession to the throne; the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, and other imperial and royal personages.

The Duke of Hamilton is said to have lost 10,000 golden ducats at baccarat in one evening's play at the Casino. After a long night's sitting in August, 1896, Count Paul Szapary lost 250,000 crowns.

His secretary telegraphed next day to the count's eldest brother, Count Ladislaus Szapary, governor of Fiume, to come to Budapest immediately as Count Paul would probably gamble away his entire fortune. Count Ladislaus came and forced his younger brother to give his word of honor not to touch a card again before his approaching marriage

Dissipated His Money.

Count Paul kept his word honorably, but managed, nevertheless, to find other ways of dissipating his money. In the magnificent Park Club at Budapest, he arranged a series of gorgeous festivities, the chief cost of which fell generally upon himself.

Every winter found him at the head of Budapest society, no ball or entertainment was complete without him. His liberality was unbounded, he contributed 20,000 crowns to a single operaball. He seized every opportunity of giving costly dinners.

But it was probably hunting which, next to carrd playing, made the most serious inroads upon his bank balance. At his estates Eorok Ujfaln and Ragy Unyom, the count entertained large sporting parties in princely style. His house was full at least three times every season, his guests sometimes numbering nearly 100 men and women.

Many Foreign Visitors.

Many distinguished visitors came from foreign lands. They came in special trains provided by the host, celebrated actors and singers were brought down from Vienna and Budapest to amuse them, and no money was spared to make their visit agreeable.

One of the most famous house parties was in the spring of 1903 when Consuelo, Duchess of Marlborough, who was then staying in Vienna; Lady Norah Churchill, and a crowd of other well-known society people were entertained by the count. His hospitalities then were not confined to his own country house, but he gave his guests a magnificent entertainment at the Park Club in Budapest upon their return there.

The count's extravagant expenditures soon outran his income, although his great estates brought in revenues of some 3,000,000 crowns a year. In the hope of checking his mad career, his family persuaded him to marry, and in 1898, he took as his wife a wealthy Polish lady of noble family, Maria Luise Prezdziecka. Her fortune amounted to 10,000,000 crowns, but the dowry which her husband actually received upon the marriage was only 700,000 crowns.

Officer in Two Clubs.

Shortly afterward Count Paul was elected president of the Park Club and of the Hungarian Automobile Club.

Released by his marriage from his promise to abstain from card playing, the count again began to gamble. He lost enormous sums at Petersburg, Monte Carlo, Paris, and Budapest. In 1901, his brother Ladislaus was again forced to come to the rescue, and at considerable sacrifice, rescued him from impending bankruptcy.

His friends then attempted to interest him in more serious pursuits. The Hungarian society for promoting tourist travel in their country made the count their president, and he also became a director of the International Sleeping Car Company, whose cars run through the principal countries of Europe.

The count, however, failed to fulfill the hopes entertained for him. His financial troubles increased, he had borrowed large sums from the great banking institutions from the Hungarian Mortgage Bank nearly 3,000,000 crowns, 600,000 crowns from the Agrarian Bank, and 500,000 crowns from Hungarian Savings Bank.

Unable to obtain more advances from such concerns, the count began to borrow from smaller people sums ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 crowns. It was the growing importunity of these smaller creditors that forced the count to leave his palace in Budapest and go, as it is said, to Paris, until some arrangement could be come to with his creditors.

His lawyers assert that after the full payment has been made to all his creditors the count will still have enough money to keep up a tolerable position in society. The countess is reported to have gone to look after her estates in Russian Poland, and keep them free from her husband's monetary entanglements.

The Szaparys are an ancient Hungarian family, tracing their descent back for centuries. They were not ennobled until 1690, when the first Baron Szapary was created. In 1722 they got another step in the peerage and became counts.

Count Paul's eldest brother, Ladislaus, governor of Fiume, is a prominent person in the political and official world. He came rather unpleasantly before the public eye some months ago when Count Khuen Hedervary, the then Minister-President of Hungary, was charged with attempting to bribe certain deputies. Count Ladislaus Szapary stepped into the breach and said that it was he who had attempted the bribery out of friendship to Count Khuen Hedervary.

HERBERT KNIGHT.

THE WORK OF A BARBER

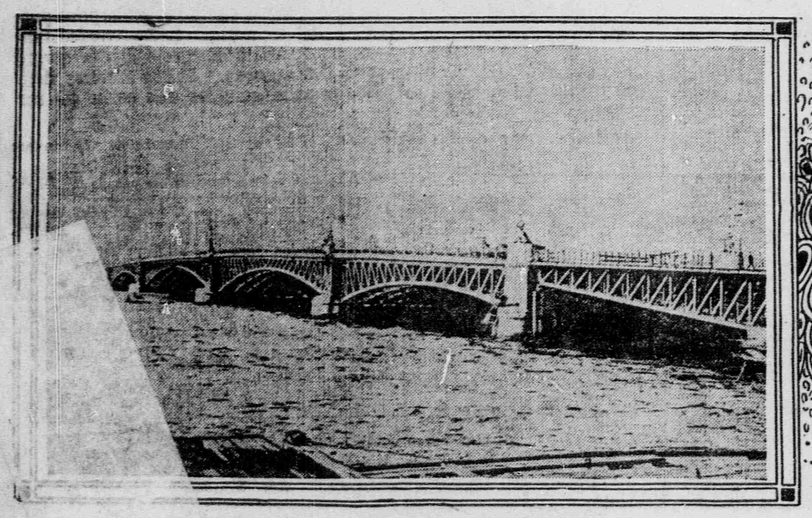
Seymour Rice has a well developed faculty for noting the unusual. He likes the queer side of life, and is always on the lookout for curious facts. Here is his latest:

"I have formed the habit of counting the strokes that a barber makes in shaving me," he said yesterday. "Now, the average man has no idea of what a shave involves; he cannot tell whether a barber makes a dozen strokes or a thousand. I have had men guessing and no one comes anywhere near the facts. For some time I have been counting the strokes that a man takes in shaving me, and it is interesting.

"I find that the first time he goes over my face he takes about 480 strokes and when he goes over it the second time he takes about 260 strokes. That makes 740 strokes to a shave. They tell me that I have a hard beard to shave, and run some above the average. But place it at 500 strokes—which is very low—and see what you get for your 15 cents. This doesn't count, either, the times that he lathers you, the steps he takes to and from the washstand, the powdering, the salving, or anything but the mere use of the razor—and I haven't counted the stropping of that. Five to eight hundred strokes to one shave—think of that. I was surprised when it was proved to me by the count, but I have kept up this count for some time now, and it varies very little.

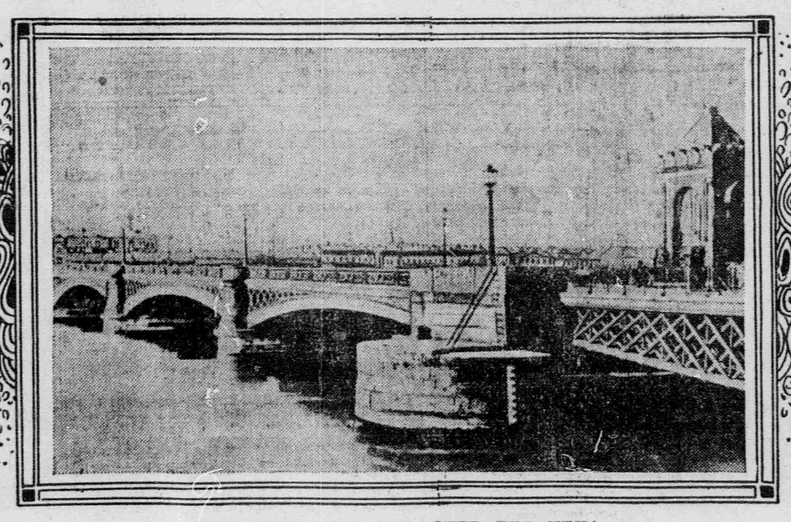
"Which adds another curious fact—the average barber shaves the same face in the same way, and a barber has rules for each sort of face, for different men count just about the same in shaving me. You would think that every barber would do it differently, but such is not the case; they all shave a given face alike. Some day I am going to count the strokes of the brush-off's whisk, to see how nearly they approximate to ragtime.—Kansas City Journal.

BRIDGES THAT FIGURED IN THE TRAGIC SCENES OF RED SUNDAY



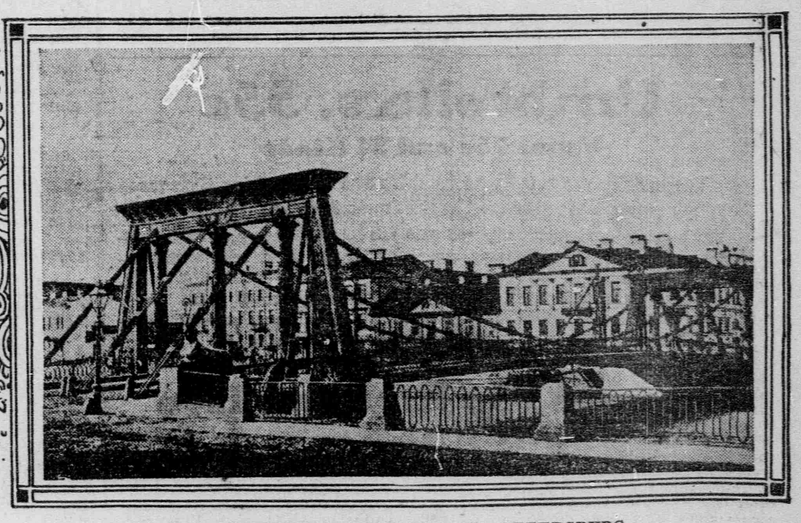
THE TROITZKY BRIDGE, ST. PETERSBURG.

Which Also Received Its Baptism of Blood on "Red Sunday." Here a Body of Workingmen Led by a Priest Were Charged by Mounted Uhlans Armed With Swords and Lances, After Which an Infantry Company Fired From Volleys at Their Shattered Ranks.



THE NICHOLAS BRIDGE OVER THE NEVA.

Where the Recent Massacre in St. Petersburg Started. It Was at the Nicholas Bridge That a Regiment of Cossacks Attacked, First With Bullets and Then With Sabers, the Body of Unarmed Workingmen Who Wished to Cross From Vassilievesky to the Winter Palace to See Their "Little Father"—the Czar.



THE EGYPTIAN BRIDGE AT ST. PETERSBURG.

Which Spans the Moika and Connects Streets Inhabited by the Working People. It is a Small Iron Structure Very Much Similar to the Ordinary American Suspension Bridges, and Was Erected About Fifty Years Ago. The Destruction of These Causeways Across the Canals Would Seriously Embarrass the Movements of Mounted Troops Sent to Quell Riots.

London, Jan. 28.

By an odd coincidence there reached London from St. Petersburg on the day before that on which the papers were filled with accounts of the massacre at the Russian capital the accompanying photographs of the bridges which figured conspicuously in the tragic scenes of "Red Sunday." "Nobody here knows," wrote the correspondent in the Russian capital, "what the next few days will bring forth. With wise management there will be no bloodshed, but with the government in the hands of a blind and brutal bureaucracy, bent on terrorizing the populace, Sunday may witness a carnage which will cause the whole civilized world to gasp with horror. Then these bridges will be drenched with gore."

The configuration of the capital and the situation of the Winter Palace rendered it inevitable that if the authorities undertook to suppress a peaceful demonstration by force of arms the most sanguinary encounters would take place on and near the bridges. St. Petersburg sprawls over the mouth of the Neva and its islands. On the biggest of these, the Vassilievesky, live most of the working population. The Czar's palace, the central point of the disturbance, lies on the left bank of the Neva. To reach it the way of the toilers of Vassilievesky lay over the St. Nicholas Bridge. For the laborers who dwelt on the right side stream the chief available bridges were the Troitzky and the Alexander. At all these bridges strong forces of troops had been placed.

It was at the St. Nicholas bridge that the massacre started. In a dense mass thousands of workmen tried to pass over it to the mainland. The Cossacks held them back—first with knouts, then with the flat of the saber, and then with a volley of blank cartridges. Still the strikers would not retreat. They implored the Cossacks, as brother Russians, to allow them to pass, declaring that they had no desire to commit deeds of violence, and that all they wished was to present a petition to the "Little Father" praying for reforms which would improve the lot of the Cossacks as well as their own.

A bugle rang out in response. Then followed another volley, this time with ball catridges aimed with deadly intent, and in a moment a writhing mass of wounded and dying were sprawling on the bridge. The Cossacks then charged the panic-stricken crowd, slashing right and left with their sabers as though delighting in the butchery of unarmed men. And thus St. Nicholas bridge received its baptism of blood.

At other bridges similar scenes of slaughter occurred. At the Troitzky Bridge the Pavlosky regiment of infantry and Uhlans was stationed. Half an hour later than their comrades from the Vassilievesky had attempted to cross the Pont Nicholas, a procession of workingmen, led by a priest not unlike Father Gapon, marched toward the Place Souvaroff, on the other side of the river.

The Uhlans guarding the bridge let the priest pass in safety. The workmen followed, not suspecting the doom that awaited them. Then, without any warning, the Uhlans charged with drawn sword and lowered lance. As the mounted troops wheeled off to one side, the infantry fired four volleys at the shattered ranks of the laborers.

It is predicted that some day—and that, perhaps, no distant day—an imposing monument will be erected at the entrance to one of the bridges over the Neva to perpetuate the memory of the men whose martyrdom started the revolution that gave freedom to Russia.